

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: October 20, 2008

From : 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 15: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the design, development and implementation of Phase II of the Marsh Park project, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution recommending authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds in the amount of \$400,000 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for project planning and design for Phase II of the Marsh Park project, Los Angeles.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2(a), 33204.27(a), and 75050(g)(2) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), allocated funds to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in Chapter 7, 75050(g)(2) of the Public Resources Code, for the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources of the Upper Los Angeles River. As outlined in the MRCA's application, staff finds the proposed project consistent with Proposition 84's policy to promote the access to and enjoyment of land and water resources.

In 2001, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) purchased the Marsh Park property, a 5.4-acre parcel located in the Los Angeles River-adjacent community of Elysian Valley in the City of Los Angeles. The acquisition was funded by a Conservancy grant from Proposition 13, the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Act of 2000. At the time of the acquisition, the site included four buildings used by industrial companies, and the MRCA inherited several leases for various parts of the property.

The Proposition 13 grant was insufficient to both acquire and improve the entire site, so development and public access was planned to occur in phases. The first phase opened in May 2006, and included demolition of one building, and improvements such as native riparian landscape plantings, picnic amenities, and a water quality enhancement feature that captures and infiltrates the residential run-off of Marsh Street. In September 2007 a skate park constructed and managed by Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust was opened on a nearby

portion of the site.

MRCA recently completed a conceptual design process for the next phase of park development. In the summer of 2008, a design team led by Meléndrez held a series of three public workshops to engage the community in discussions about the park. MRCA staff have also met with local stakeholders including Alianza de los Rios, Los Angeles City Council District 13, Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, the River Project Office, Bureau of Engineering, City of Los Angeles, and residents of Elysian Valley to discuss the park plans.

The second phase of improvements will include two acres of vacant land and the two smaller buildings. Improvements will include native habitat restoration, protection of water resources through treatment of on-site stormwater with a system of arroyos and detention basins, recreation amenities and picnic facilities. A small facility for public nature programs will be included as part of this phase. The focus of this facility will be to interpret the natural resources of the Los Angeles River, and could also be used to host group events and community events. Improvements may also include aesthetic treatments for the larger building to improve the park experience and viewshed.

MRCA has requested funds to complete the planning of this phase. The work will include the design development and construction documents associated with the park, environmental analysis, and plans for abatement of hazardous materials (if necessary). Sustainable methods and adaptive reuse opportunities will be evaluated for the buildings. MRCA has secured funding from Los Angeles County Proposition A to cover a portion of the project, however that particular grant has insufficient budget for the necessary planning.

Consideration: The amount of the grant to MRCA would be \$400,000. MRCA has obtained a fee proposal from the conceptual design consultant for design development and construction documents in the amount of \$198,000. Additional outside consultants may be required for topographic surveys, geotechnical investigations, assessments and reports regarding hazardous materials, demolition and salvage plans, environmental compliance, and/or cost estimating. These additional consultants and reports are expected to total no more than \$75,000. Hard costs such as printing, color reproductions, deliveries, and mileage reimbursements are estimated at \$25,000. Project management and oversight of consultants will be undertaken by MRCA staff, and staff will continue to coordinate the project's progress with local community groups, elected officials, and other stakeholders. The estimated budget for staff is \$102,000.